



# New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services

## HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCE FACT SHEET

Common Name: **BENZOYL PEROXIDE**

CAS Number: 94-36-0

DOT Number: UN 2085/2087/2088/2089/2090

RTK Substance number: 0215

Date: August 1992 Revision: July 1998

### HAZARD SUMMARY

- \* **Benzoyl Peroxide** can affect you when breathed in.
- \* Contact can irritate the skin and eyes.
- \* Breathing **Benzoyl Peroxide** can irritate the nose, throat and lungs.
- \* **Benzoyl Peroxide** can cause a skin allergy. If allergy develops, very low future exposures can cause itching and a skin rash.
- \* Solid **Benzoyl Peroxide** is a HIGHLY FLAMMABLE and REACTIVE CHEMICAL and is a DANGEROUS FIRE and EXPLOSION HAZARD.

### IDENTIFICATION

**Benzoyl Peroxide** is an odorless white or colorless crystalline (sand-like) powder. It is often used or shipped in liquid solutions. It is used in making plastics, rubber, inks, pharmaceuticals and skin creams.

### REASON FOR CITATION

- \* Benzoyl Peroxide is on the Hazardous Substance List because it is regulated by OSHA and cited by ACGIH, DOT, NIOSH, EPA, NFPA, IARC and DEP.
- \* This chemical is on the Special Health Hazard Substance List because it is **FLAMMABLE** and **REACTIVE**.
- \* Definitions are provided on page 5.

### HOW TO DETERMINE IF YOU ARE BEING EXPOSED

The New Jersey Right to Know Act requires most employers to label chemicals in the workplace and requires public employers to provide their employees with information and training concerning chemical hazards and controls. The federal OSHA Hazard Communication Standard, 1910.1200, requires private employers to provide similar training and information to their employees.

- \* Exposure to hazardous substances should be routinely evaluated. This may include collecting personal and area air samples. You can obtain copies of sampling results from your employer. You have a legal right to this information under OSHA 1910.20.
- \* If you think you are experiencing any work-related health problems, see a doctor trained to recognize occupational diseases. Take this Fact Sheet with you.

### WORKPLACE EXPOSURE LIMITS

OSHA: The legal airborne permissible exposure limit (PEL) is **5 mg/m<sup>3</sup>** averaged over an 8-hour workshift.

NIOSH: The recommended airborne exposure limit is **5 mg/m<sup>3</sup>** averaged over a 10-hour workshift.

ACGIH: The recommended airborne exposure limit is **5 mg/m<sup>3</sup>** averaged over an 8-hour workshift.

### WAYS OF REDUCING EXPOSURE

- \* Where possible, enclose operations and use local exhaust ventilation at the site of chemical release. If local exhaust ventilation or enclosure is not used, respirators should be worn.
- \* Wear protective work clothing.
- \* Wash thoroughly immediately after exposure to **Benzoyl Peroxide** and at the end of the workshift.
- \* The FDA (Food and Drug Administration) has set standards for Good Manufacturing Practices for Drugs and Pharmaceuticals. These should be followed for your protection as well as product quality. See the FDA regulation 21 CFR 210.
- \* Post hazard and warning information in the work area. In addition, as part of an ongoing education and training effort, communicate all information on the health and safety hazards of **Benzoyl Peroxide** to potentially exposed workers.

This Fact Sheet is a summary source of information of all potential and most severe health hazards that may result from exposure. Duration of exposure, concentration of the substance and other factors will affect your susceptibility to any of the potential effects described below.

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## HEALTH HAZARD INFORMATION

### Acute Health Effects

The following acute (short-term) health effects may occur immediately or shortly after exposure to **Benzoyl Peroxide**:

- \* Contact can irritate the skin and eyes.
- \* Breathing **Benzoyl Peroxide** can irritate the nose and throat causing coughing and wheezing.

### Chronic Health Effects

The following chronic (long-term) health effects can occur at some time after exposure to **Benzoyl Peroxide** and can last for months or years:

### Cancer Hazard

- \* According to the information presently available to the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services, **Benzoyl Peroxide** has been tested and has not been shown to cause cancer in animals.

### Reproductive Hazard

- \* According to the information presently available to the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services, **Benzoyl Peroxide** has not been tested for its ability to affect reproduction.

### Other Long-Term Effects

- \* **Benzoyl Peroxide** can cause a skin allergy. If allergy develops, very low future exposures can cause itching and a skin rash.
- \* **Benzoyl Peroxide** can irritate the lungs. Repeated exposures may cause bronchitis to develop with cough, phlegm, and/or shortness of breath.

## MEDICAL

### Medical Testing

Before beginning employment and at regular times after that, for those with frequent or potentially high exposures, the following are recommended:

- \* Lung function tests.

If symptoms develop or overexposure has occurred, the following may be useful:

- \* Skin testing with dilute **Benzoyl Peroxide** may help diagnose allergy, if done by a qualified allergist.

Any evaluation should include a careful history of past and present symptoms with an exam. Medical tests that look for damage already done are not a substitute for controlling exposure.

Request copies of your medical testing. You have a legal right to this information under OSHA 1910.20.

## WORKPLACE CONTROLS AND PRACTICES

Unless a less toxic chemical can be substituted for a hazardous substance, **ENGINEERING CONTROLS** are the most effective way of reducing exposure. The best protection is to enclose operations and/or provide local exhaust ventilation at the site of chemical release. Isolating operations can also reduce exposure. Using respirators or protective equipment is less effective than the controls mentioned above, but is sometimes necessary.

In evaluating the controls present in your workplace, consider: (1) how hazardous the substance is, (2) how much of the substance is released into the workplace and (3) whether harmful skin or eye contact could occur. Special controls should be in place for highly toxic chemicals or when significant skin, eye, or breathing exposures are possible.

In addition, the following controls are recommended:

- \* Where possible, automatically transfer **Benzoyl Peroxide** from drums or other storage containers to process containers.
- \* Before entering a confined space where **Benzoyl Peroxide** may be present, check to make sure that an explosive concentration does not exist.
- \* Specific engineering controls are required for drug manufacture by the Food and Drug Administration. Refer to the FDA regulation for Good Manufacturing Practices 21 CFR 210.

Good **WORK PRACTICES** can help to reduce hazardous exposures. The following work practices are recommended:

- \* Workers whose clothing has been contaminated by **Benzoyl Peroxide** should change into clean clothing promptly.
- \* Contaminated work clothes should be laundered by individuals who have been informed of the hazards of exposure to **Benzoyl Peroxide**.
- \* Eye wash fountains should be provided in the immediate work area for emergency use.
- \* If there is the possibility of skin exposure, emergency shower facilities should be provided.
- \* On skin contact with **Benzoyl Peroxide**, immediately wash or shower to remove the chemical. At the end of the workshift, wash any areas of the body that may have contacted **Benzoyl Peroxide**, whether or not known skin contact has occurred.

- \* Do not eat, smoke, or drink where **Benzoyl Peroxide** is handled, processed, or stored, since the chemical can be swallowed. Wash hands carefully before eating or smoking.
- \* DO NOT DRY SWEEP for clean-up. Use a wet method to reduce dust during clean-up.

## PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

WORKPLACE CONTROLS ARE BETTER THAN PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT. However, for some jobs (such as outside work, confined space entry, jobs done only once in a while, or jobs done while workplace controls are being installed), personal protective equipment may be appropriate.

OSHA 1910.132 requires employers to determine the appropriate personal protective equipment for each hazard and to train employees on how and when to use protective equipment.

The following recommendations are only guidelines and may not apply to every situation.

### Clothing

- \* Avoid skin contact with **Benzoyl Peroxide**. Wear protective gloves and clothing. Fire-resistant gloves and clothing, treated with a chemical to reduce static electricity, should be provided and worn when using solid **Benzoyl Peroxide**.
- \* Safety equipment suppliers/manufacturers can provide recommendations on the most protective glove/clothing material for your operation.
- \* All protective clothing (suits, gloves, footwear, headgear) should be clean, available each day, and put on before work.

### Eye Protection

- \* Wear splash-proof chemical goggles and face shield when working with liquid, unless full facepiece respiratory protection is worn.
- \* Wear dust-proof goggles and face shield when working with powders or dust, unless full facepiece respiratory protection is worn.

### Respiratory Protection

#### IMPROPER USE OF RESPIRATORS IS DANGEROUS.

Such equipment should only be used if the employer has a written program that takes into account workplace conditions, requirements for worker training, respirator fit testing and medical exams, as described in OSHA 1910.134.

- \* NIOSH has established new testing and certification requirements for negative pressure, air purifying, particulate filter and filtering facepiece respirators. The filter classifications of dust/mist/fume, paint spray or pesticide prefilters, and filters for radon daughters, have been replaced with the N, R, and P series. Each series has three levels of filtering efficiency: 95%, 99%, and 99.9%. Check with your safety equipment supplier or your respirator manufacturer to determine which respirator is appropriate for your facility.

- \* Where the potential exists for exposures over **5 mg/m<sup>3</sup>**, use a MSHA/NIOSH approved full facepiece respirator with a dust and mist filter containing nonoxidizable sorbents.
- \* If while wearing a filter, cartridge or canister respirator, you can smell, taste, or otherwise detect **Benzoyl Peroxide**, or in the case of a full facepiece respirator you experience eye irritation, leave the area immediately. Check to make sure the respirator-to-face seal is still good. If it is, replace the filter, cartridge, or canister. If the seal is no longer good, you may need a new respirator.
- \* Be sure to consider all potential exposures in your workplace. You may need a combination of filters, prefilters, cartridges, or canisters, to protect against different forms of a chemical (such as vapor and mist) or against a mixture of chemicals.
- \* Where the potential for high exposure exists, use a MSHA/NIOSH approved supplied-air respirator with a full facepiece operated in the positive pressure mode or with a full facepiece, hood, or helmet in the continuous flow mode, or use a MSHA/NIOSH approved self-contained breathing apparatus with a full facepiece operated in pressure-demand or other positive pressure mode.
- \* Exposure to **1500 mg/m<sup>3</sup>** is immediately dangerous to life and health. If the possibility of exposure above **1500 mg/m<sup>3</sup>** exists, use a MSHA/NIOSH approved self-contained breathing apparatus with a full facepiece operated in continuous flow or other positive pressure mode.

## HANDLING AND STORAGE

- \* Prior to working with **Benzoyl Peroxide** you should be trained on its proper handling and storage.
- \* **Benzoyl Peroxide** must be stored to avoid contact with COMBUSTIBLES (such as WOOD, OIL, and PAPER); LITHIUM ALUMINUM HYDRIDE; DIMETHYL ANILINE; AMINES; METALLIC NAPHTHENATES; ALCOHOLS; ACIDS; BASES; or ETHERS, since violent reactions occur.
- \* Containers of **Benzoyl Peroxide** must be protected from IMPACTS, BLOWS, SHOCKS or FRICTION since EXPLOSIONS may occur.
- \* Store in tightly closed containers in a cool, well-ventilated, and isolated area away from METALS, HEAT and DIRECT SUNLIGHT.
- \* Sources of ignition, such as smoking and open flames, are prohibited where **Benzoyl Peroxide** is handled, used, or stored.
- \* Use only non-sparking tools and equipment, especially when opening and closing containers of **Benzoyl Peroxide**.
- \* Metal containers involving the transfer of **Benzoyl Peroxide** should be grounded and bonded. Drums must be equipped with self-closing valves, pressure vacuum bungs, and flame arresters.
- \* Wherever **Benzoyl Peroxide** is used, handled, manufactured, or stored, use explosion-proof electrical equipment and fittings.

- \* Use and store **Benzoyl Peroxide** in original polyethylene-lined containers.
- \* If you are required to work in a "sterile" environment you require special training.

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

- Q: If I have acute health effects, will I later get chronic health effects?
- A: Not always. Most chronic (long-term) effects result from repeated exposures to a chemical.
- Q: Can I get long-term effects without ever having short-term effects?
- A: Yes, because long-term effects can occur from repeated exposures to a chemical at levels not high enough to make you immediately sick.
- Q: What are my chances of getting sick when I have been exposed to chemicals?
- A: The likelihood of becoming sick from chemicals is increased as the amount of exposure increases. This is determined by the length of time and the amount of material to which someone is exposed.
- Q: When are higher exposures more likely?
- A: Conditions which increase risk of exposure include dust releasing operations (grinding, mixing, blasting, dumping, etc.), other physical and mechanical processes (heating, pouring, spraying, spills and evaporation from large surface areas such as open containers), and "confined space" exposures (working inside vats, reactors, boilers, small rooms, etc.).
- Q: Is the risk of getting sick higher for workers than for community residents?
- A: Yes. Exposures in the community, except possibly in cases of fires or spills, are usually much lower than those found in the workplace. However, people in the community may be exposed to contaminated water as well as to chemicals in the air over long periods. Because of this, and because of exposure of children or people who are already ill, community exposures may cause health problems.

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The following information is available from:

New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services  
Occupational Disease and Injury Services  
PO Box 360  
Trenton, NJ 08625-0360  
(609) 984-1863  
(609) 292-5677 (fax)

Web address: <http://www.state.nj.us/health/eoh/odisweb/>

### Industrial Hygiene Information

Industrial hygienists are available to answer your questions regarding the control of chemical exposures using exhaust ventilation, special work practices, good housekeeping, good hygiene practices, and personal protective equipment including respirators. In addition, they can help to interpret the results of industrial hygiene survey data.

### Medical Evaluation

If you think you are becoming sick because of exposure to chemicals at your workplace, you may call personnel at the Department of Health and Senior Services, Occupational Disease and Injury Services, who can help you find the information you need.

### Public Presentations

Presentations and educational programs on occupational health or the Right to Know Act can be organized for labor unions, trade associations and other groups.

### Right to Know Information Resources

The Right to Know Infoline (609) 984-2202 can answer questions about the identity and potential health effects of chemicals, list of educational materials in occupational health, references used to prepare the Fact Sheets, preparation of the Right to Know survey, education and training programs, labeling requirements, and general information regarding the Right to Know Act. Violations of the law should be reported to (609) 984-2202.

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## DEFINITIONS

**ACGIH** is the American Conference of Governmental Industrial Hygienists. It recommends upper limits (called TLVs) for exposure to workplace chemicals.

A **carcinogen** is a substance that causes cancer.

The **CAS number** is assigned by the Chemical Abstracts Service to identify a specific chemical.

A **combustible** substance is a solid, liquid or gas that will burn.

A **corrosive** substance is a gas, liquid or solid that causes irreversible damage to human tissue or containers.

**DEP** is the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection.

**DOT** is the Department of Transportation, the federal agency that regulates the transportation of chemicals.

**EPA** is the Environmental Protection Agency, the federal agency responsible for regulating environmental hazards.

A **fetus** is an unborn human or animal.

A **flammable** substance is a solid, liquid, vapor or gas that will ignite easily and burn rapidly.

The **flash point** is the temperature at which a liquid or solid gives off vapor that can form a flammable mixture with air.

**HHAG** is the Human Health Assessment Group of the federal EPA.

**IARC** is the International Agency for Research on Cancer, a scientific group that classifies chemicals according to their cancer-causing potential.

A **miscible** substance is a liquid or gas that will evenly dissolve in another.

**mg/m<sup>3</sup>** means milligrams of a chemical in a cubic meter of air. It is a measure of concentration (weight/volume).

**MSHA** is the Mine Safety and Health Administration, the federal agency that regulates mining. It also evaluates and approves respirators.

A **mutagen** is a substance that causes mutations. A **mutation** is a change in the genetic material in a body cell. Mutations can lead to birth defects, miscarriages, or cancer.

**NAERG** is the North American Emergency Response Guidebook. It was jointly developed by Transport Canada, the United States Department of Transportation and the Secretariat of Communications and Transportation of Mexico. It is a guide for first responders to quickly identify the specific or generic hazards of material involved in a transportation incident, and to protect themselves and the general public during the initial response phase of the incident.

**NCI** is the National Cancer Institute, a federal agency that determines the cancer-causing potential of chemicals.

**NFPA** is the National Fire Protection Association. It classifies substances according to their fire and explosion hazard.

**NIOSH** is the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health. It tests equipment, evaluates and approves respirators, conducts studies of workplace hazards, and proposes standards to OSHA.

**NTP** is the National Toxicology Program which tests chemicals and reviews evidence for cancer.

**OSHA** is the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, which adopts and enforces health and safety standards.

**PEOSHA** is the Public Employees Occupational Safety and Health Act, a state law which sets PELs for New Jersey public employees.

**ppm** means parts of a substance per million parts of air. It is a measure of concentration by volume in air.

A **reactive** substance is a solid, liquid or gas that releases energy under certain conditions.

A **teratogen** is a substance that causes birth defects by damaging the fetus.

**TLV** is the Threshold Limit Value, the workplace exposure limit recommended by ACGIH.

The **vapor pressure** is a measure of how readily a liquid or a solid mixes with air at its surface. A higher vapor pressure indicates a higher concentration of the substance in air and therefore increases the likelihood of breathing it in.

FOR LARGE SPILLS AND FIRES immediately call your fire department. You can request emergency information from the following:

CHEMTREC: (800) 424-9300  
NJDEP HOTLINE: (609) 292-7172

## HANDLING AND STORAGE ( See page 3 )

## FIRST AID

*In NJ, POISON INFORMATION 1-800-764-7661*

- \* **Benzoyl Peroxide** is **HIGHLY FLAMMABLE**. At high temperatures it may EXPLODE.
- \* Use water only. DO NOT USE CHEMICAL or CO<sub>2</sub> extinguishers.
- \* POISONOUS GASES ARE PRODUCED IN FIRE.
- \* CONTAINERS MAY EXPLODE IN FIRE.
- \* **Benzoyl Peroxide** may explode if subjected to impact, blows, shock, or friction.
- \* Use water spray to keep fire-exposed containers cool.
- \* If employees are expected to fight fires, they must be trained and equipped as stated in OSHA 1910.156.

\* Remove contaminated clothing. Wash contaminated skin with soap and water.

- \* Remove the person from exposure.
- \* Begin rescue breathing if breathing has stopped and CPR if heart action has stopped.
- \* Transfer promptly to a medical facility.

## PHYSICAL DATA

**Vapor Pressure:** Less than 1 mm Hg at 68°F (20°)

**Flash Point:** 176°F (80°C)

**Water Solubility:** Slightly soluble

- \* Evacuate persons not wearing protective equipment from area of spill or leak until clean-up is complete.
- \* Remove all ignition sources.
- \* Mix spilled material with water-wetted vermiculite, and deposit in sealed polyethylene-lined containers.
- \* **DO NOT** use spark-generating materials or materials made of paper or wood for sweeping or handling spilled **Benzoyl Peroxide**.
- \* Keep **Benzoyl Peroxide** out of a confined space, such as a sewer, because of the possibility of an explosion, unless the sewer is designed to prevent the build-up of explosive concentrations.
- \* It may be necessary to contain and dispose of **Benzoyl Peroxide** as a HAZARDOUS WASTE. Contact your Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) or your regional office of the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for specific recommendations.
- \* If employees are required to clean-up spills, they must be properly trained and equipped. OSHA 1910.120(q) may be applicable.

**Chemical Name:**

Peroxide, Dibenzoyl

**Other Names:**

Benzoyl Superoxide; Benzoperoxide

*Not intended to be copied and sold for commercial purposes.*

NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND  
SENIOR SERVICES

## Right to Know Program

PO Box 368, Trenton, NJ 08625-0368  
(609) 984-2202